

Analysis

7 September 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for National Foreign Assessment
National Intelligence Officers

FROM: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Comments on [] Recent Article,
"Improving the Intelligence Estimate Process"

1. Attached is a copy of [] recent article in CONTRA on "Improving the Intelligence Estimate Process." I have some primary reactions to which I would like to invite your attention.

a. [] brings out early in his article the shortcomings of consensus intelligence and of not providing "explanations for differing perceptions of events or arguments about the concluding judgments." I have stressed repeatedly the desirability of doing away with footnotes and instead incorporating a comparative expression of the dissenting views in the text of our National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs) and Interagency Intelligence Memoranda (IIMs). Clearly we are not achieving enough here. I find it difficult sometimes at the last stage of an NFIB meeting on an NIE to introduce alternative and conflicting opinions. I have to count on your letting them come forward during the process of writing estimates.

b. [] goes on to praise the inputs we've had to the Policy Review Memoranda (PRM) and other less formal inputs such as typescripts. I have serious reservations here. The PRM process has bothered me from the beginning. The intelligence frequently was merged with policy data in the PRM writing process. We need to maintain our independence and our separateness, and this has been lost in the PRM process. With respect to typescripts, their advantage is that they come out quickly because of a lack of coordination. Their disadvantage is that they do not represent the best views within the intelligence community simply because one does not take the time to coordinate them around.

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c. It's clear, however, that if we cannot make the NIE/IIM process sufficiently responsive to the policymakers' needs, they will turn to the PRM/typescript process. In short, we've got to be argumentative; we have to present alternatives; we have to address the intelligence aspects of policy options in our estimates if we are going to return the estimate to its proper role and displace the PRM/typescript substitutes. (C)

2. I encourage each of you to work in these directions. (U)



STANSFIELD TURNER

Attachment a/s

cc: D/INR/State
D/DIA

[redacted] D/Center for
Study of Intelligence/OTR
[redacted] Center for Study of
Intelligence/OTR

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